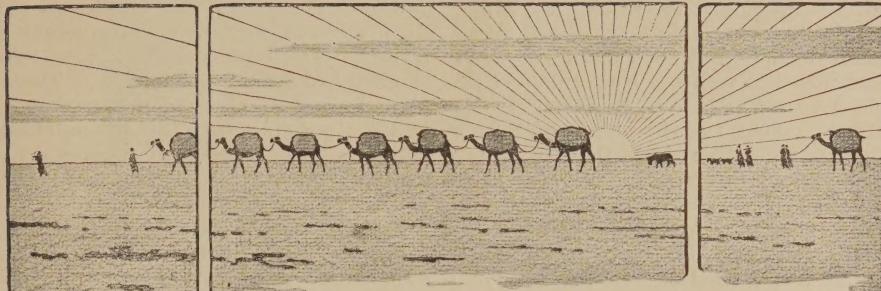


Pan-Africa-North  
Ethiopia

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## A Journey to the ABYSSINIAN CAPITAL



by Captain M.S. WELLBY.



N August, 1898, my regiment being quartered at Lucknow, the long-desired opportunity presented itself of visiting Abyssinia, and of being able to carry out my project of not only travelling through the unknown portions of Menelek's dominions, but also continuing until I reached the Anglo-Egyptian headquarters at Omdurman. My object in doing this I will not enter into here, but will merely content myself in this article with recounting some of my experiences on the first part of the journey from India to the capital of the Negus.

No sooner did the telegram arrive from home informing me that Captain Harrington, the British Agent in Abyssinia, was about to return to his post and would take me with him, than I applied for and obtained a year's leave, and commenced my preparations for departure. There was no time to lose, as I had to meet Captain Harrington on the Somali coast on September 7.

Accompanied by Lieutenant Vincent (Royal Horse Artillery), Duffadar Shahzad Mir, a native surveyor (11th Bengal Lancers), who had travelled with me across Tibet and China, another surveyor, named Ramji Lal (5th Bengal Cavalry), and my fox-terrier, "Lady," I embarked at Bombay in the steamship *Melbourne* on August 30, and after a "monsoonish" journey arrived duly at Aden. The following morning at daybreak Zeila's uninviting shores were before us. The dis-

comforts of this inhospitable barren coast were soon forgotten in the hearty welcome we received. We were fortunate enough to meet Captain Harrington himself, who had only arrived from England on the previous day. The busy scene, the piles of baggage which surrounded our bungalow, and the crowds of clamorous Somalis standing round the camels warned us only too truly that we were to start for Abyssinia at once. "I suppose," said Harrington to me, "you are bringing your dress clothes," remarking that when Prince Henri d'Orléans presented himself before Menelek in shooting costume, the King exclaimed, "Who is this person who does not know how to appear before a king?"

By sunset we were off, Harrington leading the way, perched aloft on one camel, the two duffadars on another, and Vincent and myself on a third. There was no moon, but the stars shone clearly, and we found the journey pleasant and peaceful as we silently moved along over the sandy, monotonous, maritime plain. On reaching the first camp, eight miles distant, we found a host of camels, men, and baggage awaiting us. Welcome was the sight of two tables laid for supper—a strange spectacle in the midst of the desert. As small hope of successfully carrying out our plan in its entirety was held out to us, Vincent and I decided to return to Zeila, and to equip a fresh expedition at Berbera for the interior, and the next morning we bade Harrington good-by and retraced our steps to the coast. We remained some time at Ber-

bera, and drew up various projects for an expedition, until Vincent declared he would rather go shooting than make further attempts to reach Abyssinia. Ramji Lal, too, almost lost the sight of one eye, and went back to India. As I had now lost half my companions, I decided to try and overtake Harrington at Harrar, about two hundred miles from the coast, on the road to the Abyssinian capital, and to travel with him to Adis Abbaba. I next hired eight camels and four camel-men to convey Shahzad Mir and myself and our goods to the Abyssinian frontier. I also enlisted a Somali boy, named Mohammed Hassan, who, together with Shahzad Mir and my little terrier, were my faithful friends and companions until the very end of my journey.

On the afternoon of September 13 my little caravan started from Berbera for the interior. After leaving Hargeisa, which lies at a height of nearly 4000 feet, we travelled for many miles through beautiful parklike land, alive with birds and jungle-fowl, and met many Somalis taking their produce to the coast. We next reached a great grassy plain with immense herds of camels. While crossing this section heavy rain compelled a halt, and in a short time I

had retired for the night in my small tent, and soon fell sound asleep. Suddenly my dreams were rudely disturbed by the collapse of my sleeping-place. All was in an uproar and all was darkness, while I was fast becoming suffocated with my struggles beneath the soaked canvas. At this juncture my ever-ready duffadar rushed to my aid and explained what had happened. It appears that the authors of the mischief were two camels, who, having had an altercation during the night, had selected my tent as the spot on which to settle their dispute.

At the farther end of this plain lies

the Abyssinian fort of Jig Jigga, whither I had already despatched a messenger to inform its commander of my approach, and to request that no hinderance should be placed in my way of proceeding farther. The reply ordered me to halt at once and await instructions. Thereupon I despatched a second messenger, politely pointing out that a waterless plain could scarcely be considered a fitting place in which to remain encamped, and that I was proceeding slowly to Jig Jigga. A few hours later on, from the higher ground, we hailed the fort. It was situated in an open valley, and though built on a low level, I was struck by the

conspicuous position it occupied, for it commands the main roads to Berbera, Zeila, Harrar, and the Ogaden, and it is the tax-collecting station for all caravans using these routes. As we began to descend towards it, a violent storm swept over us; yet the camels somehow managed to slide along the soaking track, till within rifle-shot of the place, when, leaving the men to pitch camp, I took my Somali boy Mohammed with me and walked on to the fort. Abdullah—for such was the name of the officer in charge—proved himself to be a worthy host and a friend with the best intentions. It

was an unmistakable pleasure to enter his primitive circular wattle hut, where a wood fire was cheerily glowing, and where fresh dry grass and matting had been spread out for my comfort, with a carpeted box whereon to dry and warm myself; and when hot cups of excellent coffee and cigars had been handed round, I for a few moments forgot the storms, the slippery roads, and the drenched weather-beaten men and camels—such is the selfishness of human nature.

After some delay at this post, a messenger arrived from Harrar with permission for me to proceed, and I forthwith set out with fresh camels and riding-mules,



SHAHZAD MIR



CAPTAIN M. S. WELLBY

after bidding a friendly good-by to my Arab host.

From Jig Jigga onwards the characteristics of the country changed, making me feel that we had indeed crossed the frontier into another dominion. Instead of open plains and jungles of thorny trees, we were in a land of hill and dale, beaming with barley and jowari fields, with neatly made little villages dotted about in cozy corners, whose circular wattle huts of brown or red looked quite

picturesque. Whilst halting at midday in the midst of such pretty scenery, where children ran out from the huts to bring me milk and piles of freshly picked tomatoes, another messenger arrived from Ras Makonnen, the Abyssinian general at Harrar, telling me to make all haste to his town, as he and Harrington were both on the point of leaving for Adis Ababa, the capital. Without any delay I set out in advance of my party with my Somali boy Hash, leaving Shahzad Mir

and Mohammed to bring the baggage. On we pressed, riding and walking alternately, taking refreshment from the several rivulets that crossed our road—for the country was hilly and cultivated. As we drew nearer to our destination we met great numbers of noisy, uncouth Abyssinian soldiers carrying their rifles, who were returning to their villages after the big festival of Mascal, or the Holy Cross. As we neared the city rain fell heavily, and we hurried on towards the walls to seek shelter beneath one of the five covered gateways by which entrance is obtained. As we waited for the rain to pass over we watched the women bringing in their bundles of sticks, from each of which the guard at the gate selected a few pieces as a tax on their goods. We then made our way up a narrow street paved with big stones, over which the water now swept like a torrent, till we found ourselves in the market-place of Harrar. Here we were in the midst of an aimless, idle, loafing crowd of Abyssinians, Gallas, Harraris, and Somalis. As we strolled around, looking about us, I noticed a European face behind the counter of a small nondescript shop, and on entering I found its owner to be an Armenian. Out of sheer good-heartedness he provided shelter and grass for our two ponies and bowls of tea for ourselves, so that we felt sufficiently invigorated to continue our search for Ras Makonnen, who is the fountain-head of everything here. Passing through the narrow crowded streets to the other side of the market-place, we then crossed a couple of court-yards of the old palace, filled with a noisy and talkative crowd. At one spot I noticed a Somali quietly strolling along, when, without any apparent provocation, an Abyssinian came up

behind and severely beat him with a stick. Quickly the Somali turned, and seizing the weapon from the aggressor, returned the blows with such interest that the latter would have fared but badly, had not other Abyssinians rushed up to his aid and joined in attacking the poor Somali, who continued fighting against excessive odds, whilst we were carried along by the crowd out of sight and hearing. An aged priest, whom I met at the entrance of Makonnen's palace, told me that Harrington was encamped without the city walls, whither he would order an official to conduct me.

Soon I came in sight of the smartly pitched camp of the British Agent, and was heartily glad to find that my attempt to make up for lost time had thus far proved successful. All this augured well for my projects. After Harrington and I had exchanged greetings we sat down to discuss our adventures on the road. The British Agent had hardly finished telling me what had befallen him on the way from Zeila when it was announced that Ras Makonnen was about to pay him a visit. Stepping outside the tent, we saw a dense crowd moving from the city towards



MOHAMMED HASSAN,  
MY SOMALI BOY

our camp. At the head of the cavalcade was a large body of soldiers marching in loose formation, yet presenting a striking picture, decked as they were in their white shammars with broad red stripes. Then rode the Governor of Harrar, Ras Makonnen himself, wearing a gray slouch felt hat and mounted on a mule, and therefore easily recognizable among the host of followers; behind him came more foot-soldiers, and crowds of people brought up the rear. As soon as the approach of the Ras was announced, Harrington's escort of four sowars, chosen from the Aden troop, were formed up with drawn and carried



CAPTAIN HARRINGTON EN ROUTE TO THE CAPITAL



RAS MAKONNEN'S SOLDIERS WAITING OUTSIDE CAPTAIN HARRINGTON'S TENT

swords ready to receive Makonnen as he drew near to the tent. As the Abyssinian general approached and saluted the escort, I was struck with his appearance. I saw him to be a well-made, clean-built horseman, with an intelligent, shrewd, kindly, and thoughtful expression. During his somewhat lengthened stay with Captain Harrington, the mass of followers standing without, a few yards distant from the tent, respectfully maintained a dead silence. As soon as the Ras proposed to move off, certain Gallas (who are the inhabitants and former possessors of southern Abyssinia) rushed forward, crying aloud, "Abeit! albeit!" which means "Justice! justice!" but for the most part they were promptly collared and roughly handled by the soldiers, who gave them a dose of what they considered "abeit."

The fates laughed at my hurried journey to Harrar, and decreed that we should remain there for more than a week. The first morning after my arrival in camp I rose early to inspect the city walls. The town is oblong in shape, surrounded by walls ten or twelve feet high. On the south of the place lay a rich valley, with a profusion of flowers, wild geranium

being the most noticeable. Towards the north stretched green valleys and hills; and on this side, close by the walls, one of the principal watering-places had been established, and to this spot numbers of women repaired. Ranges of hills on the northwest and south command the town, and were they held by skilfully posted batteries, with additional ones at Harrar itself to protect the eastern side, Harrar would be impregnable. As it is, there are some guns on the north side, whence salutes are fired, and others close to the city on the west side, and more again farther away in the hills, but their powers of execution or defence are probably not very formidable. Many a stroll I took through the bazars and busy parts of Harrar, where I came across several worthy Greeks, and imbibed many tiny cups of excellent Turkish coffee. I must have met in this city nearly twenty foreigners in all, none of whom struck me as being in a very flourishing condition, although I heard the Armenians did fairly well. None of them are allowed without the city walls, with the exception of a single Greek, who had lived at Harrar for the last twenty-five years. The Customs House, where most of the goods consisted

of ivory, coffee, cloth, lamps, and blue enamelled tumblers without number, always presented a busy, hot, and dusty spectacle.

On Sunday, church was my attraction. The service commences very early in the morning, finishing perhaps at eight o'clock. How these times would suit the good people in England I do not know!

With Mr. Beru, an Abyssinian belonging to Captain Harrington's suite, as my escort, I first entered the outer yard of a circular building—a free-and-easy place of worship, for there we found many breakfasting. We then mounted a dozen stone steps to the outer circle of the church it-

of the building and the men in the west half, being prevented from seeing one another by some white sheeting. Within this outer circle was one for the "holy ones," such as had undergone a term of fasting and so forth, and again within this was the circle of the head priest. The service itself conveyed nothing to my mind. I must therefore be forgiven for taking note of the dirty walls, which were all scribbled over. The two priests who stood by me took the opportunity of an interval in the service to call upon a youth to test his powers of chanting, with a view to his employment. Although the noise he managed to create reminded



HARRAR LOOKING FROM THE WEST

self, where were assembled the congregation, who stood around leaning on sticks five feet long, with tops of wood or brass. The priests—who, by-the-way, may always be known by their white turbans—used sticks with silver tops. I was handed a brass-topped one, and endeavored to lean naturally upon it, like everybody else; I stood between two priests, one of whom was kind enough to shake me by the hand. The sexes were separated. The women sang and prayed in the east half

me forcibly of a tameat wailing at night-time on a garden wall, yet the priests were fully satisfied. The youth's attempts at chanting, added to the contortions of his face, actually drove me out of the church. One morning M. Legarde, the French Resident at the capital, arrived in the town as I entered, and before M. Legarde's arrival, presented its normal appearance.

Suddenly there was a transformation,

and with astonishing rapidity the streets were lined with soldiers, the officers being easily noticeable by their various colored silk shirts, and by their green and purple shields inlaid with gold or silver. At the same moment three-minute guns boomed from the saluting battery, and M. Legarde appeared in full uniform, mounted on a mule, escorted by a number of Somalis dressed in white uniform, and some Abyssinians.

After a very pleasant stay, I finally left Harrar on October 6, and two days later Harrington and I were joined by Ras Makonnen with a following of several thousands strong—all of us *en route* for the capital.

On October 8 we were encamped a couple of marches out of Adis Abbaba, at a place called Worabili, in a beautiful

night-time when the temperature falls below freezing-point. It was a wonder to me that any of the camels ever completed the journey at all; those that did succeed certainly looked as if they had gone quite as far as was good for them. Monsieur Legarde himself, who sometimes bestrode a mule, also had an eye to comfort, for in lieu of wheeled conveyances, an unknown article in this country, he had treated himself to an open and closed palanquin, each carried by two mules, one pulling in front and the other pushing from behind. These conveyances are all very well in their way over the immense plains of northern China, but with continually bumping up and down steep stony gradients they are likely to come to grief. I admired the cool nerve of the man, who could recline with ease in such



CAPTAIN HARRINGTON AND HIS ESCORT

grassy depression with pine-topped hills on every side. North of us was pitched the camp of Monsieur Legarde, most of whose baggage, strange to say, was carried on Arab camels, in preference to the hardy mules of the country, who are far more at home over the hills and muddy crossings, and thrive more vigorously at

a conveyance on the very brink of a precipice, as during his journey to Adis Abbaba he often did. Monsieur Legarde's camp bore quite a martial air, for his Somalis were neatly clad in white uniform, and every morning a bugler sounded the reveille; or, I should more correctly say, intended to sound it, for his efforts dis-

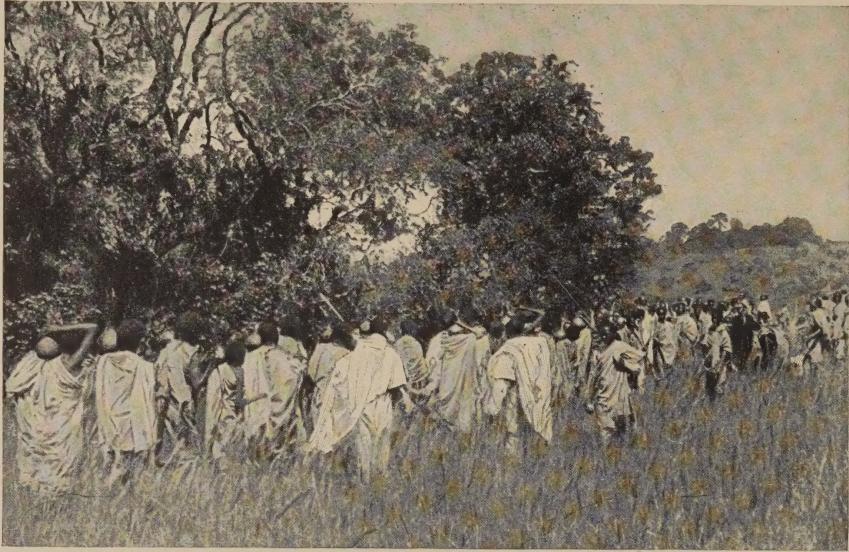


M. LEGARDE'S ARRIVAL AT RAS MAKONNEN'S PALACE AT HARRAR

closed that either he or his instrument was out of order. His object, nevertheless, was achieved, for the French camp was generally first on the road. Makonnen's stockaded camp was built on much higher ground, on a level with the pine belt; yet, despite the fact that he had to descend the hill, on the very first night our joint camps were pitched he paid Harrington a quiet friendly visit, and found sympathy for the fatigue he felt, which must have been great, seeing that he had risen very early before commencing the tedious march, to settle various complaints before leaving Harrar.

In describing the nature of the country to Adis Abbaba it will suffice to say that there were two salient points which struck me as remarkable. First, the immense amount of fertile land that lay uncultivated and undrained, growing nothing but vast stretches of grass six or eight feet high, destined only to be wasted and burnt. Second, the astonishing absence of villages and cattle. The conclusion drawn from these two observations would lead one to believe that small inducement had been offered to the Gallas, or to the Abyssinians themselves, either to cultivate or to breed, and that the advantages of commerce have so far been lost sight of.

Whenever Harrington's camp was pitched at nightfall in the neighborhood of villages, it was curious to see strings of ill-fed, half-naked villagers bringing in supplies for all his followers. After darkness had set in, the camp of the Abyssinian army on the adjacent grassy slopes strongly resembled a busy town—only the thousands of fires and lights flickering in every direction could be seen, and a subdued murmur of many voices would reach us with the wind. Everybody was astir again before day-break, and as we moved off we occasionally found ourselves unpleasantly placed in the very midst of the army. Here along the single road every one strove for himself or herself, some mounted on mules or ponies, others walking, all armed with guns, sticks, swords, or tent-poles. Then there were hosts of mules, ponies, and donkeys laden with flour, driven along by the soldiers' wives and servants, and boys carrying their master's shield or gun. There were many women with burdens of flour, followed by a brood of youngsters. The white-turbaned priests generally rode, followed perhaps by herds of living beef and mutton with their drovers. Then would follow some chief with his mounted attendants. In



VILLAGERS BRINGING SUPPLIES

fact, the struggling stream of thousands of human beings seemed endless. When the level road changed and a very steep winding pathway would ascend a stony and rocky hill, then began a veritable Babel of shouting, hustling, and jostling—every one for himself. As we endeavored to ride along quietly a mule would suddenly stop in front of us, or another, coming from behind like an express, would almost knock one of us out of the saddle. At the same time, as one tried to recover, an undeserved prod or blow from a stick or tent-pole would still further add excitement to the ride. One pair of eyes afforded us very indifferent protection in such a mixed crowd. We were constantly changing our place, and our baggage-mules became scattered, proceeding in groups of twos and threes. When the going was good, comparative silence and order reigned, yet all swept along, caring for no one but himself, bent only upon reaching the next camping-ground. Occasionally, towards the end of a long march, some would seek rest under the shade of a tree by the road-side, or a dead mule would testify to the extent of its exertions. One of the most noticeable features along the road was the Ras's tej-brewers—a string of young

ladies carrying on their backs large gombos of the precious fluid, fermenting like themselves as they struggled along in the hot sun. These fair porters could be spotted from a considerable distance, as the highly prized burdens were wrapped in red cloth. This valuable porterage was protected from thirsty souls by a number of soldiers, and the overseers of the brewery, riding on their mules, were also present to guard the precious fluid. We inquired of one of the ladies, "Where are you going to?" "Oh," she replied, "that I don't know; all I know is that I have to carry my gombos to the next camp."

On looking down from a height upon the camp of the Ras, with its thousands of souls, one would at first sight have declared that all the tents had been pitched in a haphazard way, but such in reality was not the case. The Ras's tent is the first to be pitched, and it is so placed that the door of it will face the direction of the morrow's march; then the chief officer will place his tent to the right front of this door, and the next in rank on the left front, till eventually a complete circle of tents is formed round that of the Ras. Then the followers of these officers will form a circle of tents round each of those of their chiefs, and so on *ad infinitum*.

*tum*, circles within and circles without circles. So perfectly is this method carried out that the location of each tent is known, and that despite the fact that the irregularities of the ground often necessitate the formation of very eccentric circles. Many of the soldiers who are unprovided with tents, in a very few minutes rig up a shelter by making sheaves from the high grass. The most remarkable piece of happy-go-lucky management is the grazing of the animals, which appear to roam anywhere of their own free will, yet at sunset all flock to their owners' tents!

At this period we were joined by an adventurous Irishman, named McKelvey, who has lived in Abyssinia for the last forty years. He was formerly body-guard to King John, and was one of the English prisoners held by King Theodore at Magdala, during which time he has become quite naturalized. He dresses as an Abyssinian, wearing short trousers, tight in the leg and baggy in the seat, a shamma, and no shoes or hat. He feeds, too, as a native, and has married an Abyssinian lady. Nevertheless, he still has a tender corner in his heart for his old country.

One day we encountered a blinding storm of locusts. These pests measured from two to three inches long, and their bodies were of a red color with speckled wings. From a distance they resembled a mist hanging over the land, and at first

came upon us like wind-driven snow; then thicker and thicker they came, till everything was locusts—air and earth too. There chanced to be a village close by, and the people could be seen busily engaged in lighting fires to keep the intruders away from their little piece of cultivation. Along some portions of the road, even at this the dry season, we found several places muddy and difficult to cross, which made one reflect how impossible it would be ever to extricate one's self from this mud during the rainy season. The land, however, could undoubtedly be easily drained, and decent roads very quickly made. Forty miles outside the capital we came to the important post of Balchi, where the telephone communicates both with Harrar and the capital. In order to reach Balchi it is necessary to ascend a steep narrow path-way, on which a slip would undoubtedly be fatal. Harrington was riding leisurely up this road in front, while I was walking a couple of hundred yards in the rear, when suddenly, without any warning, his powerful mule whisked round and set off at full gallop down hill. There was but an instant for considering the best course to take. Had I stood in the middle of the track, the mule might have dodged me on the wrong side and vanished with its rider down below, or it might have gone straight at me with equally disastrous results ; as it was, I



RAS MAKONNEN'S CAMP AT SHOLA

planted myself on the outer edge, with the intention of keeping the mule on the inside. The pace was terrific, and how the animal ever managed to keep its footing over the loose stones and rocks or to negotiate the corners was really marvelous. In this lively fashion the rider sped on his return journey for another two or three hundred yards before he could bring the brute to a standstill. It was indeed fortunate that the baggage-animals were well in rear, otherwise a very serious mishap must have occurred. The cause of the scare was merely a bundle of grass which was being carried on a man's head. Rounding a corner, the man

the baggage, preferring to walk the first mile or so, for, despite our heavy overcoats, we were extremely cold.

As we drew nearer to the capital we met many people coming and going; soon we were in the midst of little round huts, with their compounds protected by low mud walls, dotted here, there, and everywhere, but all alike. In the very centre of the whole scene—and in these few words you have a good idea of what the capital looks like—and completely occupying a separate hill, stood the King's red-tiled palace, surrounded by a plantation of sycamore trees. On all sides we saw extraordinary numbers of mules,



MCKELVEY FAMILY AND HOME

was himself hidden by the protruding rock, his load only being visible, and the sight of a bundle of grass sailing gayly down hill to market apparently of its own accord was altogether too much for the nerves of the mule.

On Monday, October 24, a messenger arrived from Adis Abbaba. He brought a letter from Monsieur Ilg, the Swiss gentleman who acts as Abyssinian Conseiller d'État, informing Harrington that, in accordance with his wishes, his reception at the capital would in no way be made official, and at the same time inviting us to breakfast.

At dawn the next day, accompanied by the four sowars, we started ahead of

ponies, and donkeys grazing on the excellent pasture, and in the most suitable spots villages of canvas had been pitched, all indicative of the King's impending march into Tigré. As soon as we had reached the heart of Adis Abbaba we were met and warmly received by Monsieur Ilg, who straightway led the way to his own house, where his charming wife gave us a hearty welcome. Our stay was of necessity short, for Harrington at present had no house of his own, and he had, consequently, much work to accomplish in superintending the formation of a temporary camp. We had taken nearly three weeks on our journey from Harrar to Adis Abbaba, a distance of 270 miles.

he turned over the dry ground with his knife. Presently he brought up a handful of stones and earth, and laid them on a bit of ruined wall close by. Stooping over them with his dim, sputtering lights, he presently discovered some terra-cotta fragments. His eye, practised in such things, detected them at once. They were the fragments of a head, which had measured about three inches from brow to chin.

The head, or rather the face, which he had given Eleanor at Nemi! The parting of the hair above the brow was intact, so was the beautiful curve of the cheek.

He knew it—and the likeness to Lucy. He remembered his words to Eleanor in

the garden. Holding the pieces in his hand, he went slowly back towards the terrace.

Thrown out?—flung out into the night—by Eleanor? But why? He thought and thought. A black sense of entanglement and fate grew upon him in the darkness, as he thought of the two women together, in the midnight silence, while he was pacing thus, alone. He met it with the defiance of new-born passion—with the resolute planning of a man who feels himself obscurely threatened, and realizes that his chief menace lies, not in the power of any outside enemy, but in the very goodness of the woman he loves.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

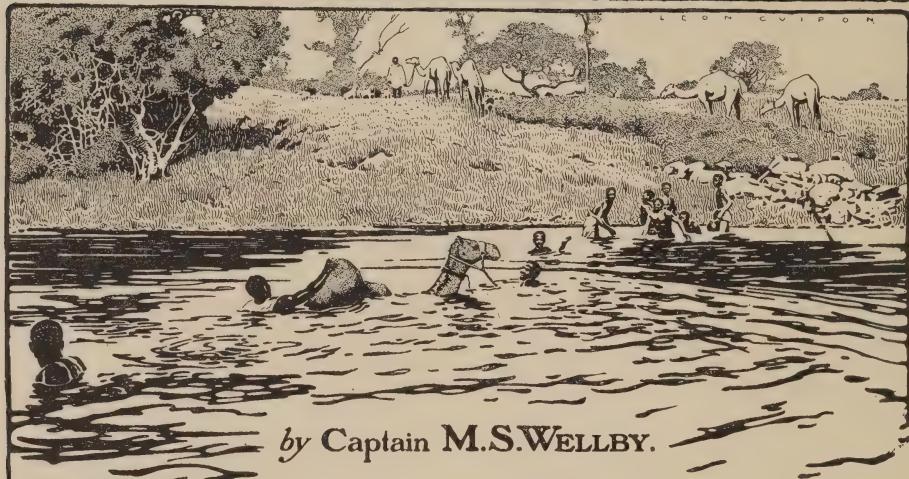
## IF LOVE BE ONE

D. MCINTYRE HENDERSON

THE skies are black, the winds are bold,  
 The road is rough and long;  
 But what are clouds and stony ways  
 When hearts are full of song?  
 And two there be who walk life's path  
 Unheeding wind or weather,  
 And minding but your merry sprite  
 Who binds their hearts together.  
 All ways are smooth, all days are bright,  
 With him for guide and sun;  
 And three are always company  
 If Love be one!

The road is smooth, the wind is soft,  
 The sky is clear o'erhead;  
 But what are pleasant ways and days  
 To those whose hearts are dead?  
 And what is song that fills the ears  
 But can no farther go?  
 And what is light that eyes can see  
 But souls can never know?  
 Ah, two there be that walk life's path  
 As though they walked alone;  
 For two are never company  
 If Love be gone.

# At the COURT of the KING of KINGS



by Captain M.S.WELLBY.



**N** the day of my arrival in the capital of Abyssinia I had not much time, even had I possessed the desire, to do

anything in the way of sight-seeing. Late at night, just as we were making preparations to turn in, a message was despatched from the palace announcing that his Majesty would receive Captain Harrington, the British Resident, at half past eight the next morning, when I was to be presented to the Negus. Accordingly, early next day I put on my war-paint and sallied forth. I felt very foolish in donning evening clothes and a felt hat at 7 A.M., and must have cut a very ridiculous figure riding a mule through the busy parts of the city *en route* to the palace in these garments; but as the Abyssinians saw nothing laughable about me, it did not matter much. On entering the outer stockade of the palace we crossed an untidy, rough, stony court, where a large, square-looking building was in process of construction. On the other side of this we were met by Monsieur Ilg, the King's secret adviser, who conducted us up a flight of stone stairs into the presence of his Imperial Majesty King Menelek II., K.C.M.G., Negus Negasti, Emperor of Ethiopia, King of Kings.

Having been introduced by Harrington and shaken hands with the monarch, I retired a few paces, but only to advance

again very shortly, and after a second hand-shake to depart. Such a brief meeting scarcely allowed me to form a fair judgment of the King. Squatting as he was when we entered, I should have taken him to be quite a small man, whereas he stands five feet ten inches high. Though by no means handsome, there is yet a very taking and frank look about his features; or perhaps I should more correctly say an open look. Shahzad Mir, my Indian surveyor, summed his appearance up in these words: "I saw a very little man and a very big mouth."

The following morning it was announced that the King, who is, among other things, styled Janhoi, intended starting that same day for the province of Tigré, and as we were not quite prepared to leave so suddenly, we agreed, at any rate, to see him off for the wars, and follow on as soon as we conveniently could. Contrary to my expectation, his departure from the palace was entirely without ceremony, and considering the importance of the occasion, there were but few people about. The King was evidently bent on getting away as quietly as possible; for on leaving the palace, instead of coming boldly forward into the open, as he might have done, he kept close by the stockade. He was preceded by a motley crowd of soldiers, both mounted and on foot. A similar force followed in his rear, some leading his extra ponies, gayly decorated with

red cloth and silver-colored trappings. We rode alongside of the King for some short distance through a struggling mob, through which men with long canes forcibly made a lane for us. We were able to go at a sufficient pace to compel those on foot to break into a double. The scene was a remarkable one; everybody seemed to be in somebody else's way, and one and all shouted, wrangled, argued, and pushed. Away on the outskirts of the moving crowds stood a line of beggars calling loudly on their King—"Janhoi! Janhoi! Janhoi!" My curiosity was soon satisfied, and I was glad when Harrington gave the signal to bid adieu to Menelek and turn our horses' heads homewards.

Two days later we were following the King's steps.

There was no mistaking the road, which took us over the hills in a north-east direction, for numbers of soldiers and their servants were flocking to the same point, whilst a few who had accompanied the King might be seen returning for the purpose of taking the more direct, though rougher, road and

along them. Early in the afternoon we sighted the mighty camp of Janhoi and his followers. At first glimpse it looked as though snow had fallen on the plains and hill-sides, but on closer approach the snow proved to be an enormous collection of tents, which so bewildered us that we despaired of ever finding the space allotted to us for our camp. Fortunately M. Ilg kindly met us and conducted us to a camping-ground close to the tents of the Emperor himself. As the day advanced, more soldiers continued to pour into camp, and more tents sprang up in every direction.

The following day, being Sunday, was duly observed, for the army remained halted, and we had the honor of breakfasting with Menelek himself at 10 A.M. As might be expected, there were crowds of attendants round and about the King's quarters. We passed under an awning, and then entered a very fine circular tent, where we found the Negus seated on a low cushioned sofa ornamented with two wings, or arm-rests. Placed in front of him was a large decorated basket holding a pile of thin round pieces of



KING  
MENELEK'S PALACE

rejoining him later at Barumeida. As we proceeded at our leisure, we noticed there were two routes, an upper and a lower one, both clearly indicated by the continuous throng of people moving

bread, called injerras, from which he occasionally ate. In front of this was a long row of baskets covered with cloth, and holding bread and little dishes of spices. On either side, seated on the

ground, were the governors of the provinces, the generals, and other grandees. Amidst this select company stood attendants dangling before their noses yards of raw, quivering meat, which had been cut from the animals the moment after their throats had been cut. From these appetizing joints the guests themselves, armed with long thin knives, cut off pieces, each according to his taste, which they forthwith proceeded to devour with great gusto. By the side of each guest stood a decanter of *tej*—the great Abyssinian drink—which was always refilled as soon as emptied.

I was surprised at the silence which pervaded the gathering; occasionally Janhoi would make a remark, otherwise there was very little talking, all being bent on eating and drinking—an operation over which they in no way hurried themselves. This semi-barbarous feast, strange to say, was brought to a most unexpected and incongruous end, for glasses were handed round and then filled with champagne, and were emptied with evident gusto; and I was glad to find this little touch of the civilized world so congenial to their tastes, and I thought

to myself it was indeed civilization washing away barbarism. When the King himself was about to drink, his own personal attendants drank a few drops out of their own palms before pouring out for the King. Other attendants then hid him from view of the "evil-eye" by spreading out their shammars in front. Yet it would seem that this custom is falling into disuse, for the King drank his coffee openly, like a European. Besides the distinguished guests who were breaking fast, other officials of importance stood in groups near or about the King. Nobody smoked, for as yet the Abyssinians have not learned the pleasure and benefit to be derived from this sociable practice.

The absence of this habit is due to the edict of King John, who absolutely forbade smoking. Menelik, however, neither forbids nor encourages it, and one will occasionally meet an Abyssinian who does smoke. Before very long smoking will probably be fashionable. As for Ilg, Captain Ciccadicola, the Italian Resident, Captain Harrington, and myself, we sat at a long narrow table at right angles to the King, and were amply and properly regaled; for besides



ABYSSINIANS PARTAKING OF THEIR FAVORITE FOOD—RAW MEAT



WITH MENELEK'S ARMY, FIRING A SALUTE IN HONOR OF THE QUEEN'S  
MESSAGE FROM A PHONOGRAPH

prodigious piles of injerras and dabo (thick bread), we partook of excellent soup, omelets, and endless courses of meat prepared in various ways. It was perhaps for this reason that we declined the last item of the menu—a lump of raw, quivering meat—although it was an offer from Janhoi himself.

Whilst enjoying our coffee and champagne, Monsieur Legarde, the representative of France, put in an appearance at the party. As the day advanced, the tent grew proportionately hot and stuffy, so that after the remnants of food had been taken away it was with a great feeling of relief that we suddenly found a large portion of the canvas removed, admitting a flow of fresh air, and disclosing many more baskets of injerras placed here and there upon the ground. At the same moment a blast from a long wooden instrument summoned the various regimental commanders to come and be fed, and in response each approached in order of rank.

Some of the seniors were serious-looking old fellows enough; but no matter—whoever they were, down they all at

once squatted, tightly packing themselves round the baskets, entirely regardless of elbow-room, and I wondered how ever the attendants managed to stand in their midst and hold up their loads of raw meat. These enormous pieces of flesh gradually grew less and less, as the officers continued to cut and slice till the bare bone alone remained. After this function great numbers of soldiers in their turn were fed outside; but I had really had sufficient enlightenment in Abyssinian diet for one day, and actually dreamed of raw meat that night. The King himself is a restricted feeder, showing even in this respect ideas far in advance of his subjects. Sometimes he even forgets all about breakfast until the afternoon, whereas one of the chief considerations of an ordinary Abyssinian is his food. The King generally ends the day at nine o'clock, starting early again at 3 A.M. On the afternoon following the feast we were destined to enjoy for a second time the honor of visiting the King, for Harrington had brought a message for him from her Majesty Queen Victoria, which she herself had spoken into a phonograph.

As we entered the tent, nearly half of which had been opened, we found the King seated as usual, whilst around him stood a number of dignitaries. Captain Harrington and his sowars, with drawn and carried swords, took their places immediately opposite the monarch. A table was then arranged in front of the King, and on this the phonograph was placed. With the exception of the gurgling sound produced by the instrument, dead silence pervaded the tent. The Negus was highly gratified with the message, even standing up that he might the more distinctly catch the words, for he was much struck with their clearness and firmness. He listened to the Queen's gracious words time after time, and readily consented to my attempting to photograph the scene. During this time a grand salute of eleven guns was being fired to celebrate the occasion. I stepped outside to try and take a picture of this event also, and found soldiers running about in every direction, anxious to learn why guns were being fired on the Sabbath. The phonograph was then carried off to the private quarters of Queen Taitu, who was equally charmed with the message, demanding several times a repetition of the Queen's words. It was a wonder to me that this particular cylinder was not completely worn out. The Queen, although understanding no English at all, was nevertheless easily able to recognize the mention of her own name.

One day I watched from the neighborhood of the royal tent the approach of Queen Taitu and her suite; she was preceded by a large escort of armed mounted soldiers, and immediately around her rode officers and ladies—the whole making a brilliant patch of color under the bright sunshine. The Queen's procession, as viewed from the royal hill, seemed endless. The Queen herself, who was thickly veiled, rode a brown mule, and was protected from the sun's rays by an enormous scarlet umbrella. As she rode past, close to where we stood, we showed our respect, not after the fashion of her own subjects, by stripping ourselves to the waists, but by saluting. Her Majesty's arrival at the royal hill was the signal for my departure.

Menelek, in spite of some faults, has achieved wonders for the well-being of his country. He is far in advance of any previous Abyssinian monarch, and under

his peaceful reign the population and prosperity of the Abyssinians have undoubtedly increased. He differs essentially from his predecessor, King John, and has thoroughly won the love of his countrymen. King John was a great warrior, and being a man of fine physique and an athlete, was esteemed by the people. His decision, whether rightly or wrongly given, was law, and though anxious to be just—for he loved his country—he would take advice from none. Menelek, on the other hand, has not the physical or athletic powers of King John. He is of heavier build, and more given to thought and deliberation; yet he is far in advance of his predecessor, for he takes counsel from those about him, and is always mindful of those below him. It is said that at the time of the "pest," some ten years ago, when the people were in dire distress by reason of their losses, Menelek formed a big camp, and setting the example to his people with his own hand, and assisted by his soldiers, tilled the soil, and in due time handed to the sufferers the fruits of their labor—an example that encouraged others to do likewise. I was told that for three whole years he ate no beef; for he argued, "Why should I enjoy plenty while my people are in want?" I doubt if any European ruler has denied himself to the same extent for a similar cause! Yet Menelek is regarded by many as a barbarian. The severity of the "pest" is felt at the present day, for the price of a cow is from twenty-five to forty dollars, whereas its former value was from two to four dollars—animals then being so cheap that the hide was sometimes sold on the live beast, as the owner was too lazy to slay and to skin it. Every day, excepting Sunday, which, as I have said before, is strictly observed, is a market-day at the capital, but by far the largest is on Saturdays, when from early morning villagers coming from all quarters may be seen driving their donkeys or mules laden with goods for sale. One of the most interesting corners of the market is where the ponies are gathered together and their points exhibited along the open sward. There is a very fair supply of ponies, some hundreds appearing in the market, and were there only Englishmen in the country, measures would be taken to introduce fresh blood and improve the present class. With but little training, many ponies as it will very soon make polo-ponies, for



QUEEN TAITU OF ABYSSINIA, AND HER GUARD AND FOLLOWERS

none of them have any fear of the stick, being daily accustomed to the frantic waving of the Abyssinian spears. Few can jump, though most of them take to it willingly enough; but this is not always the case, for on one occasion my latest purchase, in a fit of obstinacy, refused to jump, and knocked down half a mud wall round one of the wattle huts. "Oh,"

women who throng the market, for many of them are excessively pretty. In spite of the big market, the money in circulation is sufficiently awkward to deter most Europeans from buying. A quarter of a dollar is represented by an amole, which is a stick of salt measuring nearly a foot in length. If chipped, however, five or even six of these go to a dollar. Car-



RESIDENCE OF MONSIEUR LEGARDE

cried out the old lady who occupied the place, "it's all very well; if you take a fall, you have the money to pay somebody to nurse you, but I have no one to pay for the nursing of my wall." Next to the ponies the wood-sellers take up their position in the market, and one cannot help being filled with commiseration for these men on comparing the amount of their work and their pay, for they have to bring the "turbas," or long pieces of wood, in to market from a distance of fifteen miles. Close by are the sellers of honey, wax, and butter, the last averaging a dollar for eight pounds. Next are the sellers of various sorts of grain. This is principally barley and teff, but I have also noticed wheat, pease, beans, oats, rice, and linseed. There are also for sale silver trinkets, cloth, beads, cartridge-belts, files, skins, leather straps (*machanya*), saddles, inferior knives, various articles made of iron, hardware, and so forth, and, lastly, fowls, sheep, and cattle. One is much struck by the appearance of the

tridges are employed for smaller sums than this. Adjoining the market-place is the custom-house, where ivory and coffee and piles of Gras rifles are most conspicuous. Mules and donkeys, of which a few months ago large numbers were seen in the market, are now no longer for sale, owing to an edict of the King restricting the price. I was therefore compelled to undertake several two-day trips to search for them.

One day I informed my Abyssinians that I intended paying a visit to the hill called Yerrer, situated west of Adis Ababa, but they did all they could to dissuade me from such a trip, saying that a "Shaitan" dwelt there, and that for this reason they dare not go. This strange bit of news was quite enough to rouse my curiosity, and I made inquiries regarding the Shaitan, and was told the following legend:

Somewhere on this hill there is a cave guarded by the Shaitan, which penetrates so far into the bowels of the earth that

nobody has ever been able to reach its limits, where the Gallas, when invaded, were accustomed to conceal their cattle. According to popular belief, in time to come there will at some period emerge from this cave a king whose name will be Theodore, and an abuna (bishop) called Zahai (Sun). These will rule from Yerer to Gondar. The army of this King Theodore will be composed of Shangkallas.\* East of Yerer all will be prosperous, but towards the west King Menelek and his army will be annihilated. During the reign of this new king a small piece of land will satisfy the wants of thousands of people, and the milk from one cow will be sufficient for thirty men; prosperity will reign throughout, and all will love God, and will strive for paradise and obtain it.

Early the next morning I set out to visit this cave, to try and find out the truth of the legend from the guardian himself. After a pleasant ride of seven or eight miles over grassy, undulating ground, we reached Akaki-a, the clear-flowing stream on the opposite bank of which were a number of caves, inhabited by people and their cattle. These caves were all connected by mysterious back passages, and although providing good shelter from sun and rain, still have this drawback—that on emerging from any one of them one stands a very good chance of stepping into space. There are said to be great stores of grass inside these caverns. After another couple of hours' ride we halted by a rivulet for breakfast and to rest the animals. My Abyssinians again took the opportunity of repeating their belief that none who ascended Yerer would come down alive. Disregarding their assertions, I moved on again at noon, through fields of oats, pease, beans, and linseed, steering for the northeast side of the hill, where a collec-

\* Abyssinians in general call everybody with a black skin a Shangkalla, no matter whether he is a Galla, Turkana, Soudanese, or other.



AT ADIS ABBABA;  
SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH

tion of small villages was situated. Here the present of a "salt" (amole) gained the friendship of one of the inhabitants, who agreed to act as guide and take me to the summit of the mountain and show me the Shaitan's cave. We walked and climbed hard for an hour or so, and were well repaid for our exertions, for I was enabled to take bearings to all my other points. On the return journey, after taking a somewhat indirect route, we climbed with loaded rifles along a precipitous hillside, thick with undergrowth, till quite suddenly we came upon the entrance to the mysterious place. Here lay a quantity of bones, the hoof of a pony, the jawbone of a donkey, porcupine quills, and other tokens of the Shaitan's greed, but all our efforts by shouting and hurling sticks and stones

failed to disturb the guardian. To penetrate into the cave was by no means an inviting task, as it entailed for the first few yards a crawl, literally *ventre à terre*, in thick slimy mud, and I preferred to go off and shoot a couple of gazelles for supper instead of grovelling in slush. At daybreak we climbed again to explore

or Pool of Siloam. There is a legend connected with Zaquala. There is a lake at the very summit, from the centre of which a dim light, it is said, used to be seen shining through the dead of night, but which latterly, owing to so many sinners visiting the spot, had disappeared. It is also said that on this mysterious hill there are two big stones lying close together. No sinner is allowed to pass between them until he confesses his faults; but should anybody whose soul is perfect attempt the passage, he will pass through without harm. The lake, too, has marvellous properties, for all who bathe in its waters not only cleanse their bodies, but their souls also. There is no end to the legends connected with this priest-ridden spot. I set out for the same mountain with half a dozen Abyssinians, taking a fairly good track through grass, at times over steep and rocky paths. The climb was enlivened on the way by a successful stalk after a gazelle, and rewarded at the summit by finding there a lake of wonderful beauty. It lay silent at the bottom of a natural hollow; the hills rose up on every side for some six hundred feet, and here and there were thickly wooded. Around the lake grew turf and shady bushes, and there was an air of sanctity about the place.

As we stood cooling in the breeze and gazing on the sombre water, I broke silence by saying that we would first visit the two holy stones, which our guide pointed out close by. They certainly were rather awkward, but majestic. I was the first to try to get through. When half-way I stopped short, pulled a long face, and shouted. The men were at their wits' end, until my laughter spoiled the joke, which they all thought tremendous fun.

We next inspected a rounded rock standing alone on the grass by the water's edge. It was actually sweating in the sun, this being due to the practice of certain Gallas, who, in order to propitiate the spirit of the stone, deposit a



MARKET-DAY, ADIS ABBABA

more caves and renew our search for Shaitan. Some were most awkwardly placed, and as we crept along, hanging to the tufts of grass and hardy plants, my boots were far from giving me a sound footing, and my men were equally persistent in warning me that if I did slip, I should in truth be launched into eternity, as if the danger of my position was not sufficiently brought home to me without frequent reminders. Search as we might, all was in vain. We therefore returned down the eastern side, in order to see some famous ruins of a building said to have been erected by Cadros (King Theodore). The outer walls had originally been of circular shape, and inside them there had been a square building, where the remains of massive pillars and the ruins of steps leading up to the interior could be distinguished. The whole had been built of slabs of sandstone. Some of them were of immense size (as much as twenty feet long), and the sight naturally made me pause and wonder how on earth men contrived to carry and place them.

Another excursion I made was to the famous mount of Zaquala, which has been described as a kind of Abyssinian Lourdes,



RUSSIAN REPRESENTATIVE, VLASSOF, AND HIS ESCORT

small dab of ghi on its surface. We then saw, hidden in the midst of cotton and juniper trees, a couple of churches, close to one of which dwelt a "fakir." This holy man had spent his entire lifetime wrapt in meditation, wanting neither money nor food, and living entirely on the grass. He was so concealed by thick bushes that I could not catch a sight of him, though I distinctly heard his mumblings.

Whilst enjoying our luncheon, three priests passed by, who, on hearing that I was Ingliz, expressed a wish to show me a third church, where men came to worship. This sacred spot consisted of three holes in the midst of some rocks, large enough to hold worshippers. There was nothing remarkable in their appearance, but the fact of men electing to bow down in such a place struck me as distinctly odd. The priests told me the depth of the lake was beyond measure, but I had no means of verifying the statement. Its height above the sea-level

was about 9000 feet, water boiling at a temperature of 195.8°.

One day Harrington and I rode out to the forest of Managaska, fifteen miles distant, where some of the best timber is procured. Riding over pleasant grassland, with occasional gullies and rivulets, we eventually reached the abode of the King of the Forest, who happens to be a Greek. Greeks will somehow or other ferret out the least frequented spots on earth and there eke out an existence. Around his circular wattle hut—the home of this particular Greek—a space had been cleared, and the views over the tops of endless cotton-trees were magnificent. He was happy enough with his Abyssinian wife and female slave, drawing sixty dollars a month from the royal treasury, and as we reclined on carpets sipping Turkish coffee beneath a shady tree, hot and tired from our long ride, I for a moment, but only for the moment, envied the little Greek, as he related his battles with the countless panthers, and

stalks over the hills after game. The spot well deserves a visit by reason of its beauty, not to mention the hospitality of the Greek.

Amidst my preparations the days slipped by at an alarming rate, and had there been more English people at the capital I might have never wished to quit it. Some of our mornings were spent hunting the "Jack," but the royal pack (the dogs were being trained by Harrington for the King) at first were scarcely accustomed to our ways, and the day generally ended by our chasing the "Jack" with spears and without hounds. Others were employed in visiting our Russian, French, or Italian neighbors, or in a chat with those most hospitable and charming people M. and Mme. Ilg.

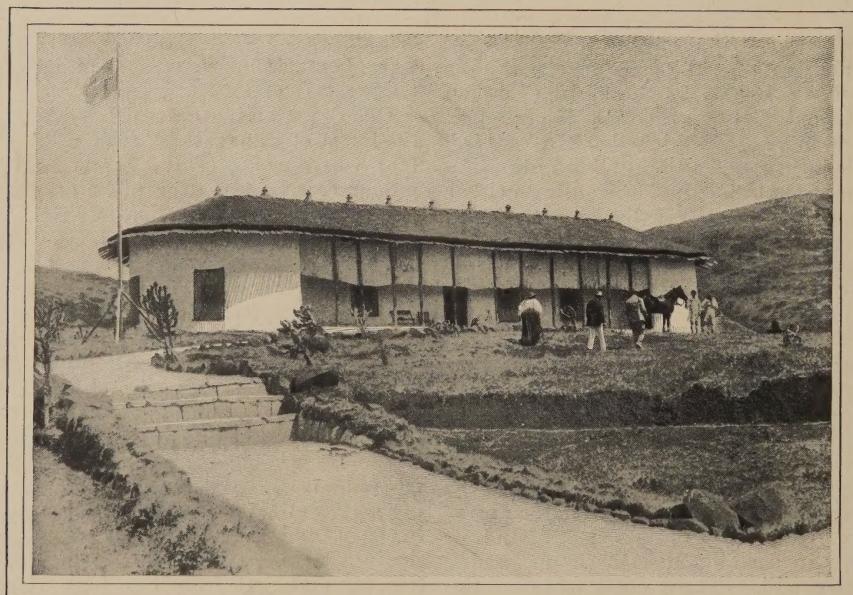
In Abyssinia there are as good a climate and as good sport as one could possibly wish to have, but there is a dearth of Englishmen.

The Russian Residency is distinguished by a "tame" ostrich which guards the portals. On entering the enclosure the first time I was taken quite unawares by the "pet" rushing furiously at me and my pony. Had I been able I should have fled straight away, but an irate os-

trich, of all animals, gives no time to think of flight, and I mechanically slashed out right and left with my stick, while my attendant aided by throwing stones from a safe distance.

While in the midst of the excitement, Mme. Vlassof appeared on the veranda of the house and called out, in a great state of mind: "Do nothing! do nothing!" This advice, however, I was rude enough to disregard, but retiring and defending, I eventually made good my retreat to where she stood, when the ostrich, more obedient to Mme. Vlassof's voice than I had been, desisted from further attack. In order to guard against any further encounter I promised to arm myself with a sharp sword, hoping that my threat would cause the bird to be tied up if its life were valued.

Sunday, the 18th December, was my last day in Adis Abbaba, and was largely taken up in making final calls on my many good and hospitable friends. Finally I bade good-by to Captain Harrington, the last European I should see for many months, and started on my long journey through unknown Abyssinia, with the hope of eventually joining the Sirdar at Khartoum.



RUSSIAN RESIDENCE AT ADIS ABBABA, SHOWING  
M. LEGARDE AND M. AND MME. VLASSOF